Quantum of traffic at Amritsar Airport

*387. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of outgoing and incoming passengers traffic per week at the time of taking a decision to declare Amritsar (Raja Sansi) Airport as an International Airport;

(b) the average passenger traffic going abroad therefrom; and

(c) the normal timings of taking off the flights?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Although Amritsar airport has not been declared as an international airport, Indian Airlines, Air India and Ariana Afghan operate flights to international destinations from this airport. The quantum of outgoing and incoming passenger traffic at the time of commencing operations to international destinations was 196 and 191 per week respectively.

(b) According to the latest information available, the average number of passengers going abroad per week is 63 by Indian Airlines and 26 by Ariana Afghan airlines. Air India operates flights ex-Amritsar to Delhi to connect overseas destinations and carried 60 passengers in June, 1998.

(c) The flight timings of scheduled flights going abroad from Amritsar airport is as under.

Indian Airlines - 18.10 hrs. to Sharjah (twice weekly)

Ariana Afghans Airlines - 02.30 hrs. to Kabul (thrice weekly)

Air India - 01.45 hrs. to Delhi (twice weekly).

Transfer of funds for centrally sponsored schemes directly to the Panchayat Administration

*388. SHRI JOYANTA ROY:
SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the West Bengal Government has objected to the Central proposal for the transfer of funds for all Centrally Sponsored Schemes pertaining to subjects like agriculture and rural development direct to the Panchayat Administration without the intervention of the State Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Chief Minister of West Bengal reiterated his Government's stand in his meeting with the Prime Minister at New Delhi on 19th May, 1998;

(c) if so, whether the Central Government have decided to rescind the proposal; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA):

(a) An exercise has been done in the Planning Commission on the issue of transfer of Centrally Sponsored Schemes to the States. A note prepared in this regard was circulated to all State/Union Territory Governments, and to the concerned Central Ministries/Department for their comments. After considering their comments a revised proposal, including the modalities for transfer of funds, is being prepared for the consideration of the National Development Council.

In this context, it may be mentioned that no communication has been received in the Planning Commission from the Government of West Bengal regarding transfer of funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes pertaining to subjects like

Agriculture and Rural Development direct to Panchayat Administration without the intervention of the State Government.

(b) In the meeting of 19th May, 1998 with the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister, West Bengal expressed the need for early implementation of transfer of Centrally Sponsored Schemes pertaining to State subjects to the States with funds. The issue of direct transfer of funds to Panchayats was not raised.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

Steps to restructure BIFR

*389. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government have taken for restructuring of BIFR into fast track facilitator and for early detection of sickness in industries; and

(b) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): (a) and (b) The Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Bill, 1997 to replace the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA) which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 16th May, 1997 lapsed on the dissolution of the 11th Lok Sabha in December, 1997. Action has been initiated to recast the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Bill, 1997.

Strategy against use of drugs

*390. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the global strategy to fight against drugs adopted in UN meet held in June, 1998;

(b) the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to fight the menace in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): (a) The United Nations General Assembly adopted unanimously a global strategy setting a ten year target to eradicate demand and supply of illicit narcotic drugs. The main document of the Summit called for a significant reduction in the area of demand for illicit drugs and elimination of illicit drug crops with provision for alternative development. The Resolutions adopted also provide for strong counter-measures to eliminate money laundering, production and abuse of Amphatemines, as well as for enhanced judicial cooperation between Member Nations.

(b) The Government of India welcomes the adoption of global strategy and fully supports it.

(c) All Enforcement agencies are being strengthened. A strict vigil will be maintained by the Government to keep a track on the activities of the drug smugglers, specially in the North Eastern and North West border areas. The Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 is being amended, with the aim of making it more effective.

Problem of black money in the country

*391. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimates of black money in the country as on 31st March, 1998;

(b) what has been the response of the VDIS;

(c) whether Government propose to introduce similar schemes to unearth black money;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) how Government propose to tackle the problem of black money?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): (a) No estimate is available of the amount of Black Money in the country as on 31.3.98. There was a